

Rockville City Police Department

Crime Prevention Tips for the Home

- Insure that your home is properly secure. Make sure that the doors are locked and lights are on when leaving. The Rockville City Police Department will perform a crime prevention survey of your home, if requested.
- If someone knocks at your door, find out who it is through a peephole or window BEFORE you ask.
- Always check identification before opening your door.
- DO NOT open your door to strangers or allow anyone such as servicemen or sales representatives into your home without proper identification and verification. Call their home office if necessary.
- If a stranger asks to use your telephone in an emergency, offer to make the call yourself.
- Get to know your neighbors -- someone you can turn to if you're worried.
- If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.
- If you come home and believe a break in has occurred, do not go inside. Go to the nearest telephone and call the police.
- If someone pushes their way into your home, go to an area where you can get out, get help, or defend yourself.
- Join a Neighborhood Watch Program. If you don't have one in your neighborhood, contact the Rockville City Police Department for more information on how to start one.

Home Security

- Make sure doors and windows are locked.
- Make sure exterior doors are solid core wood or metal.
- Deadbolt locks should be used on all exterior doors.
- Check door moldings for tight fit.
- Doors should be hinged so no pins can be removed from outside.
- Replace locks with the double-cylinder type (which also needs keys on the inside), particularly doors with glass panels.
- Keep garage and tool shed locked.
- Remove all obstructions in your yard that could conceal a burglar breaking into your house.
- Consider changing your locks when moving into a new house or apartment.
- Install a peephole-viewer in your door.
- Use exterior lighting around your home.
- If you live alone don't advertise it. Use only your initials and last name on your mailbox and telephone listing.
- Never hide keys outside, such as under a bush or in a flowerpot. Burglars know where to find "secret" hiding places. It's much better to leave a key with a trusted neighbor.
- Don't place identification tags on your keys or key rings; if you lose them, you give potential burglars help.
- Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available bars or locks, or put a wooden dowel or broom handle in the door track. Burglars look for sliding glass doors because they are the easiest to open.
- Secure roof openings and exhaust systems.
- Make sure windows, especially those at ground level, have good locks-and always use the locks you have.
- The center thumb-turn locks on many standard windows can be easily pried open or reached through a broken pane. For especially vulnerable windows, install key locks or consider installing grates or grilles (but make sure the devices can be easily detached to allow quick escape during a fire or other emergency). Glass block windows offer excellent security for basement windows.
- Always lock up ladders and tools. Don't give a burglar the resources to break into your home.

- Window air conditioning units should be bolted to the wall to prevent them from being easily removed from the outside.
- If you have recently purchased a television, stereo equipment, or other household item, do not throw the empty boxes in the alley garbage. This is a sure sign and strong temptation for burglars.
- Turn the ringer on the telephone down low. If a burglar is around, he won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing phone.
- If you are out during the day or on vacation, use an automatic timer to turn on lights and a radio at different times of the day. It is an easy way to disguise the fact they you aren't home.
- Have a trusted neighbor pick up your mail and newspapers every day while you are on vacation. Have a neighbor use your garbage cans occasionally. During the winter, arrange to have snow shoveled.

Neighborhood Watch Group

- You can do something about crime in your neighborhood by participating in "Neighborhood Watch".
- Neighborhood watch programs belong to—and are run by—the people in the neighborhood, not the police.
- They have been proven to reduce neighborhood crime by as much as 60%, but are equally effective in neighborhoods with no or low crime rates.
- The police department helps train members in home security and reporting skills, and gives information about crime patterns in the neighborhood.
- The "Watch" group has a Coordinator and Block Captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.
- Everyone is a Block Watcher who keeps an eye out for suspicious activity and calls police if need be.
- Effective Watches build a sense of community by having regular meetings which give neighbors a chance to know each other. Some even publish a newsletter with crime prevention and neighborhood highlights.

Safety Tips for a Safe Home

- Keep emergency numbers on or near the phones.
- Keep doors and windows locked.
- Install a peephole in the door so you can see who is there without opening the door.
- Never let a stranger into the house. Don't be embarrassed to insist on proper ID.
- If you are a female living alone do not put your first name on the mailbox or in the phone book.
- If a stranger asks to use the phone, don't let them. Offer to place the call for them.
- Make sure you have a lock on your bedroom door.
- Consider installing a phone in the bedroom. This would enable you to call for help.
- Always keep window shades and curtains drawn at night.
- Never change clothes in front of a window.
- Vary your daily routine of coming and going.
- Plan in advance your potential routes of escape should an intruder or fire make it necessary.

Vacation / Trips

Thieves look for what police term "targets of opportunity." There are many things you can do to avoid becoming one of the victims, especially when you are going to be away from your home for an extended period of time.

- If you plan to be gone for a long period of time, have someone pick up your mail and newspaper, or have them stopped until you return.
- Double check second floor, garage and basement windows--areas that are often forgotten.
- Leave a car in the driveway. Have outside lights turned on and off with a timer.
- Arrange to have the yard cut and bushes trimmed.

- Have several timers attached to lights in various locations throughout the house.
- Ask neighbors to check your house regularly. Leave a number with them where you can be located. Ask them to use your garbage cans.
- Don't tell everyone about your vacation plans.
- Don't leave notes on your door for deliveries, friends, etc..
- If you return home and find a break-in, do not enter the house. Call police at once using a neighbor's phone.
- Make an inventory of your property. Mark your valuables with an engraver. Use your driver's license number (and State) as identification on your property.
- Make sure your doors and windows are locked with the deadbolt lock and auxiliary locks.